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ROTHBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year ended 31st March 1948. ? 1947

Lord Ravensworth Ladies and Gentlemen.

The area of the Rothbury Rural District is 167.186 acres and the estimated population 5,650.

The number of Births registered was 92 an increase of 19 in 1946. Of these 39 were males (one illegitimate) and 53 females. The birth rate was 16.4 compared with 13.1 in 1946 the rate for England and Wales being 20.5. There were two still births as there were in 1946.

The number of Deaths registered was 65 compared with 79 in the previous year - 32 being males and 33 feamles. The rate per 1000 was 11.6 compared with 14.1 in 1946 - the rate for England and Wales being 12.0. There was one death in infancy due to premature birth. No death was dueto road accidents; one was due to suicide.

The chied causes of death were:-

Heart disease and vascular lesions 18 a decrease of 6.
Cancer 7 a decrease of 5 compared with 1946.

Infecticus Diseases notified:-

Total number 187 - 82 more than in the year before.
They were classified as follows:-

Whooping Cough	88
Measles	48
Scarlet Fever	14
Pneumonia	13
Diphtheria	11
Erysipelas	10
Typhoid Fever	1
Paratyphoid Fever	1
Acute Polio-myelitis	1

Harbottle and Thropton districts provided most of the cases of whooping cough, whilst 12 of these occurred at Silverton House Institution.
Of the eleven cases of Diphtheria five occurred at the W.L.A. Hostel Thropton.
There were no deaths due to Whooping Cough or Measles but one to Pneumonia. The district appears to continue to be well protected against Diphtheria by immunisation in infancy.

Tuberculosis Fifteen cases were notified, eleven being pulmonary. Nine were males and six females.
On these fifteen, one case has been removed from the register as being "Not now T.B.", two cases of cervical gland infection have been removed as being "quiescent" and one case has been "lost sight of".

At the end of the year 21 cases (14 males and 7 females) remained on the Register. These numbers are, in my opinion, toohigh for a country district in which overcrowding is comparatively rare.

COQUETDALE COTTAGE HOSPITAL Here a Maternity Ward was formally opened by Lady Buchanan Riddell on November 26th and between that date and the end of the year five babies were born there all belonging to this district. There can be no doubt this Maternity centre will prove of immense value to the district and beyond and makes things much easier for patient and doctor.

WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE My thanks are due to the Sanitary Inspector for the following report:-

Water Supplies These were satisfactory both in quantity and quality.
Alnham - a private supply was short on some accasions. The amount of water available is small and the position was aggravated by a Canteen being established at the School. The Hostel is looking for a supply of its own and when this is in operation we can look for an improvement in the village.

During the year the Council extended a main at Alwinton to serve 8 houses and at Longframlington to serve 16 in the course of erection.

At Rothbury a new main was laid to give an improved supply to three houses and a farm. At Thropton a new main was laid to give and improved supply to 2 houses and two farms.

The Council supplies approximately 60% of the population. Tynemouth Corporation 3% from their main as it runs through our district and the remainder from wells and springs under private ownership.

The number of houses in each parish supplied from public mains is as follows:-

Parish	Houses	Population in Houses.
Elsdon	31	100.
Longframlington	163	530 .
Rothbury	534	1,750.
Whitton	18	39.
Thropton	88	286.
Whittingham	98	325.

Drainage and Sewerage No changes took place during the year. The Rothbury Sewer was broken by a landslide as a result of flooding and storm, and caused some pollution of the river. The affected part of the sewer was relaid in steel tubes and the nuisance abated.

REMARKS The weather of 1947 was remarkable for its records and extreme contrasts. The severe snowstorms and frosts of the early months were followed by floods in many areas and the prolonged sunshine and heat of the summer were followed by severe droughts.

And yet we weathered the storm and the incidence of disease and deaths was not appreciately affected, a proof of the remarkable adaptability of human beings to the vagaries of a truly wonderful climate!

The food position of 1947 was not better than that of 1946. The flesh meat allowance was no larger and the meat itself certainly no more tender. After the bone and gristle of the weekly joint had been removed, what remained was not worth mentioning and hardly worth cooking. In fact we fed as semi-vegetarians and maintained wonderfully good health, chiefly on milk, cereals fish and potatoes. Essential foods such as sugar butter eggs cheese and oils and fats were again drastically rationed.

To suggest that "Sausage meat" might fill the vacuum which nature abhors is somewhat hazardous. If the composition of the sausage-meat were disclosed probably nature would still more abhor the suggestion !

At one time we read of the dining-table groaning under the weight of substantial joints and tankards of ale. Now-a-days for a very different reason it is the diners themselves who do the groaning.!